



Awareness of Textile Disposal and Recycling Options

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Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study was to gauge consumer awareness and initiative in relation to textile disposal and recycling in Ames and Des Moines.
- Textiles are defined in this study as clothing, footwear, household textiles (sheets, towels, etc.), and other products made with fabric.

Introduction

- "...an estimated 12.4 million tons of footwear, clothing, and other non-durable textiles were generated in 2013," which constitutes "4.9 percent of total municipal solid waste" (U.S. EPA).
 - Of those textiles, approximately 14.4 percent of clothing and footwear and 18.0 percent of other textiles were recovered for export or reprocessing in 2013 (U.S. EPA).
- For clothing, 95 percent can be recycled (45 percent--re-worn, 30 percent--industrial rags, 20 percent--ground down and reprocessed [SMART]).

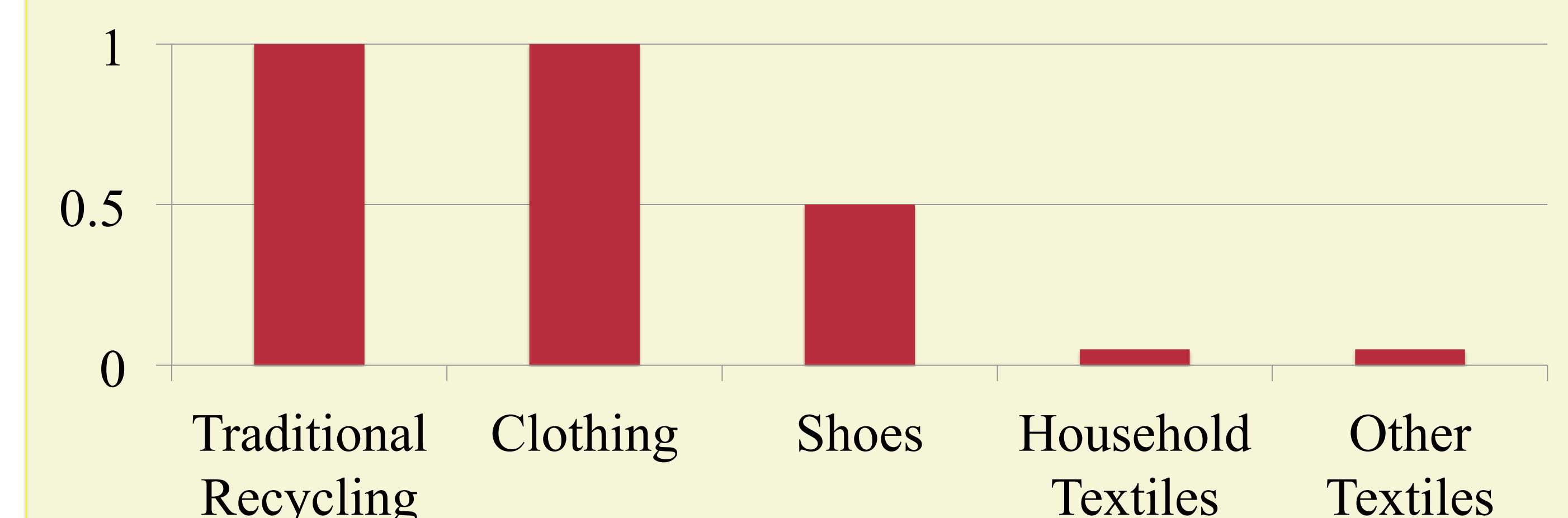
Method

- A Qualtrics survey was created and distributed via email and social media.
- The survey asked the following questions to gauge awareness and initiative:
 - Which methods of recycling were considered and utilized?
 - How participants would classify themselves as textile recyclers?
- Data was analyzed manually in Microsoft Excel.
- Elements of the survey were derived from previous research (Domina and Koch, 1998 & 1999).

Results

- There were 49 completed surveys, with the majority of participants in the 18-24 age group (49%).
- The most preferred method of textile recycling among participants was to pass on textile goods to family and friends (43.5%).
 - The least preferred method was to dispose of textiles in the garbage (56.5%).

- The majority of participants classified themselves as environmental (39%) and/or charitable (39%) textile recyclers.
- How often participants recycled:



Conclusion

- This study has implications for those in the fields of secondary and higher education, for teaching regarding textile recycling.
- Interested organizations may include local and state governments, policy makers, non-governmental organizations, and other interest groups.
- For future research, more responses will be required in order for data collected to be statistically significant.

References

Domina, T., & Koch, K.. (1998) and (1999)
Secondary Materials And Recycled Textiles Association
United States Environmental Protection Agency